United Nations A/53/PV.101

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

101st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 8 June 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ka (Senegal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Agenda item 118 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members that Haiti has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): This information will be reflected in an addendum to document A/53/835.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 17 (e) and (f), 111, 112, 112 and 119, 113, 122 (a) and (b), 123, 124 (a), 125, 126, 127 together with 128, 132 and 134, 130, 131, 133, 136, 138 to 142, 143 (a), 145, 161 and 165.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Tammam Sulaiman of the Syrian Arab Republic, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour today to present to the General Assembly the report of the Firth Committee on the agenda items dealt with during the second resumption of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, which was held at Headquarters from 10 to 28 May 1999.

Regarding agenda item 111, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/738/Add.1. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly defer consideration of the report of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations to the main part of its fifty-fourth session. The oral decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 112, entitled "Review of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/521/Add.3. In that report, there are two decisions adopted by the Fifth Committee, namely the question of procurement reform and the action taken on certain documents. In paragraph 8 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly to defer

99-85438 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

consideration of the question of procurement reform to the main part of its fifty-fourth session with a view to concluding it, and to defer consideration of certain documents until its fifty-fourth session. These two oral decisions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Under item 113, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", the Committee considered the question of the Development Account. In this connection, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/485/Add.4. In paragraph 12 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding item 119, "Human resources management", the Committee considered the question of management irregularities causing financial losses to the Organization, which was considered also under item 112, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations". The report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/533/Add.2, and in paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/233 of 23 December 1994, the Fifth Committee, at its resumed session, was to consider mainly the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations. In that connection, the Committee considered the financing of peacekeeping missions under the following agenda items: item 122, "Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East" — (a) "United Nations Disengagement Observer Force" and (b) "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon"; item 123, "Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola"; item 124, "Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)" — (a) "United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission"; item 125, "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara"; item 126, "Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia"; item 127, "Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters"; item 128, "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II"; item 130, "Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus"; item 131, "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia"; item 132, "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti"; item 133, "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia"; item 134, "Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda"; item 136, "Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan"; item 138, "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina"; item 139, "Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and the Civilian Police Support Group"; item 140, "Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force"; item 141, "Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti"; item 142, "Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala"; and item 161, "Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic".

The General Assembly has before it the reports of the Fifth Committee on the financing of each of these peacekeeping missions. The draft resolutions on each of them, with the exception of item 122 (b), "Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon", were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon is contained in document A/53/982. In paragraph 11 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted in the Committee by a recorded vote of 132 to 2, with 2 abstentions. It may be recalled that the Committee, in a single separate vote, decided to retain the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 10 and 11 of the draft resolution.

Regarding item 143 (a), entitled "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/522/Add.3. In paragraph 16 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft resolutions, on the support account for peacekeeping missions, financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. These three draft resolutions were adopted by the Committee without a

vote. In paragraph 17 of the same report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft decisions dealing respectively with the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund, death and disability benefits, and reform procedures for determining reimbursement to Member States for contingent-owned equipment. The three draft decisions were adopted in the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 145, entitled "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/891/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision by which it would defer consideration of this item to the main part of its fifty-fourth session. This oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 165, entitled "Joint Inspection Unit", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/933. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision by which it would defer consideration of this item to the main part of its fifty-fourth session. This oral draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

During this part of the resumed fifty-third session, the Fifth Committee resumed its consideration of item 17, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments". On sub-item (e), entitled "Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/711/Add.1. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of Ms. Marsha A. Echols of the United States of America for a term of office beginning on the date of the appointment by the General Assembly and ending on 31 December 2001. Under sub-item (f), entitled "Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission and designation of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Commission", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/712/Add.1. In paragraph 9 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of Mr. José Ramón Sanchis Muñoz of Argentina to fill the unexpired portion of the term of office of Mr. Carlos Vegega. The Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of Mr. Eugeniusz Wyzner of Poland as Vice-Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission for a term of office beginning on the date of the appointment by the General Assembly and ending on 31 December 2002.

Finally, allow me to thank members of the Secretariat for their valuable contribution to the work of the Committee, and in particular to thank the Secretariat team of the Fifth Committee, especially Mr. Joseph Acakpo-Satchivi, for their ever-continuing dedication to the success of the work of the Committee during the fifty-third session General Assembly.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: I should like to inform members that the representative of Guyana has expressed a desire to make a statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in connection with the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 113, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", which is contained in document A/53/485/Add.4.

Bearing in mind rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that General Assembly agrees to discuss that report?

It was so decided.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance. This means

that where recorded votes and a separate vote were taken, we will do the same. I should also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 17 *(continued)*

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(e) Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/711/Add.1)

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: In paragraph 5 of the report contained in document A/53/711/Add.1, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Ms. Marsha A. Echols (United States of America) a member of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal for a term of office beginning on 8 June 1999 and ending on 31 December 2001.

May I consider that the Assembly appoints this person?

It was so decided.

(f) International Civil Service Commission

(i) Appointment of members of the Commission

(ii) Designation of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Commission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/712/Add.1)

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The Assembly will next consider the appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission and the designation of the Vice-Chairman of the Commission.

In paragraph 9 of the report contained in document A/53/712/Add.1, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. José Ramón Sanchis Muñoz (Argentina) a member of the International Civil Service Commission for a term of office beginning on 8 June 1999 and ending on 31 December 2002.

In the same paragraph, the First Committee also recommends that the General Assembly designate Mr. Eugeniusz Wyzner (Poland) as Vice-Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission for a term of office beginning on 8 June 1999 and ending on 31 December 2002.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves these recommendations?

It was so decided.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 111 *(continued)*

Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/738/Add.1)

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 111.

Agenda item 112 *(continued)*

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/521/Add.3)

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Procurement reform", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Action taken on certain documents", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 112.

Agenda items 112 and 119 *(continued)*

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/533/Add.2)

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Management irregularities causing financial losses to the Organization", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/225).

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 112 and 119.

Agenda item 113 *(continued)*

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/485/Add.4)

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: In accordance with the decision taken earlier by the General Assembly, I now call on the representative of Guyana, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Barnwell (Guyana): The Group of 77 and China welcomes the conclusion of the deliberations on the utilization of the development dividend, in the amount of $13 million, which will allow the Secretariat to implement the seven approved projects.

Recognizing the ad hoc nature of this exercise, the Group emphasizes that all projects, in future, should be formulated and submitted for approval in accordance with existing budgetary procedures. The Group is of the view that for full implementation of these projects, the General Assembly will have to agree on a multi-year mechanism for the Development Account.

The Group made great efforts and showed a significant degree of flexibility so as to facilitate the work of the Fifth Committee on the issue of the modalities and sustainability of the Development Account. Unfortunately, the initiative of the Group on this issue was not met in the same spirit by some of our negotiating partners. This led the Fifth Committee to defer consideration of the issue to the main part of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The Group would like to reaffirm its position that the operation of the Development Account should be in accordance with the relevant regulations and rules of the Organization, since it is a part of the regular budget. Furthermore, it must be neither a budget reduction exercise nor a staff reduction exercise.

The Group stresses the need to conclude consideration of the issue of modalities and sustainability of the Development Account before we begin our deliberations on the budget at the fifty-fourth session.

Finally, the Group is ready to work constructively and actively in concluding work on this important agenda

item in the fifty-fourth session and expects a similar willingness and flexibility from our partners in this regard.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 12 of its report (A/53/485/Add.4) and on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 13 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Development Account".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/220 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We turn next to the two draft decisions. The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "United Nations Fund for International Partnerships", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Modalities for operating the Development Account", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 113.

Agenda item 122

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/979)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/226).

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/982)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report.

A single separate vote has been requested on the first preambular paragraph and on operative paragraphs 2, 3, 10 and 11 of the draft resolution.

If there is no objection to that request, the Assembly will vote on the first preambular paragraph and on operative paragraphs 2, 3, 10, and 11 of the draft resolution.

I call on the representative of Israel for an explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Gold (Israel): First, I would like to reiterate that the State of Israel supports the continued funding and strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping forces in general. Moreover, we point to certain examples, such as the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), as models of the good work that peacekeeping forces can accomplish when the parties concerned share the responsibility for making them successful.

Therefore, it should be clearly understood that our stance regarding those who would wilfully exploit these peacekeepers as a shield for bloodshed and hatred in no way detracts from our positive stance with regard to the mission of peacekeeping operations themselves.

The terrorist group Hezbollah has enjoyed a safe haven in Lebanon from which to launch incessant attacks on civilian towns and villages in northern Israel, all through the 1980s and 1990s. It has taken hostage the citizens of other United Nations Member States. It has also assaulted the diplomatic missions of other Member States. Moreover, Hezbollah's attacks are declaredly aimed against Israel's very existence and against the lives of its civilians, notwithstanding Hezbollah's misuse of the term "resistance" to describe its terrorism.

Indeed, on 6 March 1999, in a statement to *Jamhuri-i-Islami*, which is published in Tehran, Mr. Hassan Nasrallah stated,

> "Palestine is occupied territory, and the Israeli presence there is an occupation entity and illegal. There is no end to the struggle with such a regime".

Israel is left with no choice but to respond in self-defence to these attacks against its territory. It is therefore particularly regrettable that Hezbollah not only engages in terrorism, but attempts to hide behind civilians and United Nations areas while doing so. This amounts to a cruel and cynical exploitation of the neutral and innocent in the service of terrorism. And as we have seen, all terrorist tactics lead only to disastrous consequences and excess human suffering.

It was in an effort to avoid these consequences that Israel issued a warning, on 14 April 1996, after days of relentless rocket attacks by Hezbollah on our northern villages. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) informed the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) that it had detected Hezbollah trying to fire rockets from the vicinity of UNIFIL positions in an attempt to escape a defensive response. The IDF requested that UNIFIL prevent Hezbollah from doing so.

On 15 April, Fijian UNIFIL officers spotted Hezbollah attempting to fire rockets from the Fijian battalion. They ordered the Hezbollah terrorists to desist. Instead, the Hezbollah gunmen opened fire. On 17 April, noontime, UNIFIL soldiers, this time Nepalese, again tried to prevent Hezbollah terrorists from using a UNIFIL base to launch rocket attacks. They ordered the Hezbollah to cease its operations there. The Hezbollah responded with a hand-grenade attack.

Later, on 17 April, UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel confirmed that rockets had been launched from a site near the Fijian headquarters. Israel once again warned that it would have to defend itself and not allow Hezbollah a safe haven for attack. On 18 April 1996, Israel informed UNIFIL that the IDF would have to respond to a rocket attack launched from a base merely 350 metres from the Qana compound. Only after all this did Israel finally respond in self-defence.

Israel has announced its continued willingness to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) in its entirety. That resolution calls not only for a withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, but also for the restoration of international peace and security and for the return of effective Lebanese authority to the area. Israel has repeatedly invited Lebanon to negotiate the implementation of the resolution. Lebanon, however, continues to refuse to negotiate.

Clearly, the responsibility for the consequences of exercising the right of self-defence against armed attack must rest entirely with the perpetrators of such attack and with those who support them. Israel bears no responsibility or blame for taking necessary measures in the legitimate exercise of this right. Israel can, however, negotiate a resolution to the conflict that will restore peace and security to our border and ultimately prevent these incidents. Unfortunately, the Government of Lebanon refuses to consider this option.

The draft resolution moves decidedly further away from reconciliation and resolution, not least because it distracts the Member States from the true culprits. Even worse, it rewards terrorists and their insidious exploitation of the innocent and the neutral. We urge Member States to oppose this confrontational initiative and instead to show good faith in opening a new era of working together to peacefully resolve conflicts. In this light, Israel calls upon the Government of Lebanon to return to the negotiating table and implement resolution 425 (1973) so that we may restore peace to our common borders.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now put to the vote the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 10 and 11, on which a single separate vote has been requested.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay

The first preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 10 and 11 were retained by 74 votes to 2, with 42 abstentions.

[The delegation of the Sudan subsequently informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in paragraph 11 of document A/53/982 as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by 119 votes to 2, with 1 abstention (resolution 53/227).

[The delegation of the Sudan subsequently informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Barnwell (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group of 77 and China would like to express its support for the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and to thank those delegations that supported the draft resolution.

Ms. Shearouse (United States of America): While the United States strongly supports the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which is implementing a difficult and important mandate, we were unable to support the adoption of this funding resolution because of the use of it to pursue claims against a Member State, which procedurally is not correct.

That is why we opposed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 52/237 last year and 51/233 the previous year, which decided that the costs stemming from the incident at Qana should be borne by Israel alone. Those resolutions were not consensus resolutions.

Since shortly after the United Nations inception, the procedure which has been followed is that the Secretary-General presents and pursues the settlement of the Organization's claims against a State or States. This procedure was first begun in 1946 in the Middle East and continues for the peacekeeping-related damage claims in the Balkans.

Using a funding resolution to legislate a settlement is inappropriate. It also unnecessarily politicizes the work of the Fifth Committee and should in future be avoided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Najem (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Every time the Fifth Committee considers a draft resolution on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the representative of the Israeli occupying forces levels accusations at us that are false and have no legal basis.

We have heard the representative of the occupying Israeli forces attack the honourable people who are resisting the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. He called them terrorists because of their refusal to be subjected to the control of the Israeli occupation forces. But they are fighting for freedom and for the liberation of Lebanon from this shameful scourge. Is it possible that he does not believe that they are attacking Lebanon with criminal resolve, violating its sovereignty and integrity, and brazenly disregarding United Nations resolutions?

What will succeeding generations think when they learn of the contravention by a State Member of this international Organization of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, Security Council and human rights organizations? That State clearly considers itself above international law and legitimacy. How can those who are resisting Israel's occupation of their land be terrorists? Is the occupation of a territory by force not terrorism? Is the assassination of innocent civilians, women and children, not terrorism? Was the bombing of United Nations headquarters in Qana by the Israeli occupying forces, as well as the murder of 106 innocent civilians, not an act of terrorism?

The statement made by the representative of the occupying forces about the Qana incident is inaccurate. I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the report submitted by General Van Kappen, who was sent by the Secretary-General to investigate the Qana incident. That report (S/1996/337), issued on 7 May 1996, condemns the occupying forces and accuses them of bombing the United Nations headquarters even though they knew full well that innocent civilians had taken refuge behind the flag of the Organization.

What the Israeli occupying forces call terrorism is in fact valiant resistance against alien occupation — a right that is safeguarded in all international instruments and laws. That valiant resistance against the forces of occupation will continue, along with political endeavours, until the implementation of resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Lebanese territories to internationally recognized boundaries.

I should like here to refer to the first defeat of the occupying forces: their pullout from Jenin. Israel's claim that it is working towards the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is but a lie aimed at misleading international public opinion and diverting attention from the crimes they commit daily. If Israel is so desirous of implementing resolution 425 (1978), the solution is clear-cut: unconditional and immediate withdrawal to international boundaries, as provided for in that resolution and not as interpreted by the Israeli occupying forces.

Israel's conditions for withdrawal are nothing more than an attempt to shirk responsibility, to perpetuate the occupation and to divert attention from its expansionist policies. The Israeli occupying forces are destroying life in southern Lebanon with their repeated attacks on villages populated by innocent civilians. They are impeding the work of schools and the tasks of daily life. The right to life and to security are fundamental human rights, but the occupying forces are seeking to annihilate those rights in southern Lebanon. But they have not succeeded, and they will not succeed.

The Israeli occupying forces have tried all manner of war against my country through violence and through invasion, but they have not succeeded. Lebanon believes in a peace based on resolutions of international legitimacy, the principle of land for peace and, in particular, Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Let me cite the Torah, where in Habakkuk 2:17, the prophet warns that "The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you". That is the achievement of resistance.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to respond to what was said by the representative of the Israeli terrorist forces of occupation. Everyone knows that Israel's history is built on war, occupation, aggression, colonization, settling on the land of others — and on State terrorism, which since its foundation Israel has used against Arab civilians and even against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

The resolution we have just adopted addresses the consequences of Israeli terrorism against UNIFIL headquarters, a symbol of peace, at a time when Israel is trying to speak of peace. What can the international community expect of a State that commits aggression against a United Nations facility established to defend peace, undeterred by its United Nations insignia? The pretext cited by the representative of the terrorist occupying Power has already been rejected by the General Assembly, which has condemned the 1996 terrorism against UNIFIL headquarters at Qana in southern Lebanon. Israeli terrorism is State terrorism, not limited to killing people, taking their lands and creating refugees, but going so far as to attack the headquarters of a United Nations force, UNIFIL.

Today's resolution is a minimal response to the major crime committed by Israel at Qana. In resolutions 51/233 and 52/237, the General Assembly called on Israel to bear the costs of its actions at Qana. But Israel has had no wish to comply, so those resolutions have been added to the list of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions that Israel has consistently flouted. If Israel is serious about seeking peace, then it must unconditionally implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). It must also implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions calling upon it to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories.

The heroic resistance of the valiant Lebanese fighters in southern Lebanon does that people credit, for their land is occupied by Israel.

If Israel seriously wishes peace, it should begin by implementing the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We have grown used to hearing the unconvincing arguments in favour of peace that the representative of Israel utters, but peace is not merely spoken about: peace has to be made. Israel's history is based on terrorism. How can the international community, as represented in this Assembly, believe that Israel will implement the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly?

Israel's crime at Qana was not its first, and I fear it will not be its last. Resolutions of international legitimacy must be respected. This is the acid test of Israel's intentions: the implementation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions is the only road to peace.

Mr. Gold (Israel): Orwellian language that has really not been used since the breakup of the Soviet empire is in high gear again in the United Nations. For us to create a new world order based on peace and security, certain basic definitions have to be agreed upon by Member States. That language does not seem to be agreed upon today.

The representative of Syria spoke about State terrorism. Indeed, it is the Syrian Arab Republic that is on the United States Department of State list of countries that are engaged in State support for terrorism. Terrorism is a form of warfare whose purpose is to take aim at innocent civilians. And that is precisely the type of warfare in which Hezbollah engages; it aims at Israeli towns and villages, strikes them not by accident but by intention.

I frankly do not understand how the representative of Lebanon can speak about Hezbollah as honourable people, or as a valiant resistance, when indeed they take aim at Israeli towns and villages by intention.

The problem we face is that the voices we are hearing today coming out of Lebanon are resisting the peace process and are in fact scorning United Nations resolutions. On 5 January 1999, Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah stated plainly, "Only resistance will ensure the return of our land, not resolution 425, nor the Security Council, nor the international community".

And rather than being rebuked, the leaders of Hezbollah were in fact praised — for example, on the Voice of Lebanon on 16 February 1999, when Prime Minister Selim Hoss praised the jihad and resistance of Hezbollah. In fact, the policy of scorning Security Council resolution 425 (1978) was continued by the Lebanese Prime Minister when he stated on *Saut Al-Arab* radio on 14 March 1999, "We are not ready at all to discuss with Israel any security arrangements or the granting of any guarantees".

To create peace and security we need common definitions. We need to rebuke terrorism — terrorism that is not resistance, that targets civilians, seizes hostages and attacks diplomatic missions. That is not resistance. In order to make peace and security work in the Middle East we need to implement United Nations resolutions like resolution 425 (1978) of the Security Council, which seeks not only an Israeli withdrawal, but also the creation of peace and security along Israel's common border with Lebanon and the restoration of Lebanese authority in the south.

Terrorism and peace are incompatible. Dialogue and the implementation of resolutions will create peace.

Mr. Najem (Lebanon) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I apologize for prolonging this discussion, but what we have heard compels us to respond.

First, we do not accept the representative of the occupying forces giving us lessons on how to carry out a political dialogue. We know more than they do on that score. Secondly, the representative of the occupying forces defined terrorism as a war deliberately launched against civilians, which is exactly what Israel engages in. The representative of the occupying forces is credible to no one here representing the international community as a whole.

The facts are quite straightforward: Israel, the occupying State, has occupied southern Lebanon since 1978. Resolution 425 (1978) calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from However, the occupying forces have for 21 years refused to implement that resolution.

What law endorses a State's occupation of the territory of another State and its imposition of conditions for withdrawal? And if the State that has suffered the aggression resists it is accused of terrorism. Is it not terrorism for Israel to acquire nuclear weapons and then threaten all its neighbours? Is aggression not committed daily against southern Lebanon?

Qana is the place where the New Testament states that Jesus Christ performed his first miracle by changing water into wine. Yet even the holiness of that place meant nothing to the occupying forces when they violated the integrity of the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) by deliberately bombing it. Any of the Members of the United Nations who followed developments at the time know that there was an Israeli reconnaissance plane flying over the area while the bombing was taking place. The plane was caught on videotape, and that tape was shown on television in a European State, a fact that was reported in newspapers throughout the world. It was on the basis of that information that Major-General van Kappen wrote his report contained in document S/1996/337. So what is the representative of the occupation talking about? Why does he wish to mislead people? His State is occupying the territory of another State by force. It must withdraw from Lebanon today, not tomorrow.

Resistance in Lebanon is supported by all the Lebanese people, not just by a particular segment of the population. Comprising 17 religious communities, all the people of Lebanon support the resistance and respect the martyrs.

We call for the occupying forces to respect international legitimacy like everyone else and to withdraw from southern Lebanon.

Finally, I would like to point out that the representative of the occupying forces said he supported UNIFIL. I do not believe that is true. Recently, on 1 June I believe, UNIFIL forces were bombed by the occupying forces, and one soldier of the Irish battalion was martyred. The Secretary-General issued a statement in this connection in which he referred to the responsibility of Israel's so-called Defence Forces for this incident.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: My delegation has requested to speak once again in exercise of its right of reply to the representative of the Israeli terrorist occupying forces.

Israel's crimes are as clear as day, regardless of how much it tries to cover them up. The General Assembly will therefore continue to consider those crimes year after year until Israel stops perpetrating them, withdraws from occupied Arab territories and ceases to carry out State terrorism.

Before speaking about a new world order, Israel should remember what that order is. It is an order based on peace — a peace that Israel does not know and which it has never sought. That world order cannot be established without Israel's commitment to implement resolutions of international legitimacy. That is the only way to ensure that the new world order can provide the stability to which the representative of the occupying forces refers.

With regard to his list of so-called terrorism, the representative of the terrorist occupying forces may recall that he is now at the United Nations, which represents 185 Member States. He is not at a forum of another Member State. Perhaps he is forgetting procedures and realities. It is only in his imagination that such a list exists.

History has shown that since the establishment of Israel the words Israel and peace are contradictory — an oxymoron, as they say in English. Those two words simply cannot go together. That is why Israel is a rogue State. It will remain on the periphery of international law until it implements the resolutions of international legitimacy; until it withdraws from occupied Arab territories; until it ends its daily acts of terrorism and until it respects the resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations. Only then will peace be able to return to the region of the Middle East.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 122.

Agenda item 123 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/745/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/228).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 123.

Agenda item 124 *(continued)*

Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991):

(a) United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/987)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/229).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/544/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution

recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/18 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda item 126

Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/988)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/230).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 126.

Agenda items 127, 128, 132 and 134

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/990)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 127, 128, 132 and 134.

Agenda item 130

Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/980)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/231).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 130.

Agenda item 131

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/983)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/232).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda item 133

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/984)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 133.

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/545/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/19 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 138

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/985)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/233).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda item 139

Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and the Civilian Police Support Group

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/986)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/234).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 140 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/546/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/20 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 141 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/873/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/222 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 142

Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/981)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/235).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 142.

Agenda item 143 (*continued*)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/522/Add.3)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now take decisions on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 16 of its report (A/53/522/Add.3) and on the three draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 17 of the same report.

We turn first to the three draft resolutions.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution I, entitled "Support account for peacekeeping operations", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/12 B).

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/236).

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution III, entitled "Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/237).

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We turn next to the three draft decisions.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, "Peacekeeping Reserve Fund", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, "Death and disability benefits", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision III, "Reform procedures for determining reimbursement to Member States for contingent-owned equipment", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote on the resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Bond (United States of America): The United States is pleased that the General Assembly has adopted resolution 53/12 B, which provides funding and staffing for the support account for peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping is one of the United Nations most critical mandates and the backstopping effort at Headquarters provides much-needed support for those men and women who serve the Organization overseas. Let there be no doubt that the United States remains completely supportive of the peacekeeping function.

The United States wants to emphasize the importance with which we view paragraph 21 of the resolution, which requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the necessary military and civilian police expertise in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is maintained. We consider the important roles and functions that the active duty military and police officers

perform to be absolutely critical to the ability of the United Nations to mount and sustain its peacekeeping operations. We will watch closely to see that this expertise is maintained.

While the United States joined consensus on this very important resolution, we are very skeptical of paragraph 26, in which the General Assembly decides to delete a paragraph from the Secretary-General's report on the support account. We will not enter into a debate on the content of the paragraph. We find, however, the notion that this might serve as a precedent very chilling. The General Assembly cannot rewrite reports of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly can only take action on reports of the Secretary-General when those reports contain his unbiased and honest views. This is not a budget document; the portion of the report in question had to do with the Secretary-General's view on the nature of threats to peace. It is not for the General Assembly to tell the Secretary-General how to think. If Member States disagree with elements of any report, the appropriate avenue is to make a formal statement to that effect, but censorship is not an appropriate recourse.

This action cannot establish a precedent in the Organization. The United States will remain vigilant in making sure that the Secretary-General's ability to produce reports that carry his views is unimpeded.

Mr. Hynes (Canada): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the CANZ Group of countries — Australia, New Zealand and Canada — regarding the adoption of resolution 53/12 B concerning the support account for peacekeeping operations.

Our delegations joined the consensus on that resolution because we believe that, during this period of transition, the level of posts and funding specified in the resolution are appropriate to meet the needs of the Organization in backstopping its important peacekeeping activities.

Our delegations are concerned, however, that, increasingly, extraneous references and requests for information are appearing in Fifth Committee resolutions. This resolution is a case in point, including as it does paragraphs that pertain to non-financial matters and clearly go beyond the Committee's mandate as the main General Assembly body charged with financial and budgetary matters. For example, paragraph 26 of this resolution — as the representative of the United States of America has just mentioned — decides, or I might say purports, to delete a paragraph of the report of the Secretary-General on the support account.

Whatever the substantive merits of the issue at hand, we believe that a request to delete a paragraph of a report of the Secretary-General is an inappropriate and unjustified measure. It is not the responsibility of the Fifth Committee or of any other Committee to edit or rewrite the reports of the Secretary-General. Such action represents, in our view, a thoroughly inappropriate encroachment on the professional independence of the Secretary-General — the independence he must enjoy to perform effectively his role as chief administrative officer of the Organization, a role laid down in Article 97 of the Charter and elaborated in Article 100.

I might add that we are, of course, confident that, in reacting to this element of the resolution or in not reacting to it, the Secretary-General will ensure that this jurisdictional imperative is upheld.

We would also like to note the concern of our delegations that the inclusion of this particular element in the resolution gave rise to unnecessary and protracted negotiations — negotiations which focused primarily on non-financial matters and in which consensus on the funding and level of posts was quite inappropriately withheld as a bargaining chip until agreement could be reached. Our delegations consider this a most regrettable and irresponsible path for the Fifth Committee to take. It is, of course, a regular habit of the Fifth Committee to remind other Committees of the assertion in General Assembly resolution 45/248 B that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters.

Given this predisposition, it would seem incumbent on the Fifth Committee in its turn to refrain from addressing items that fall more properly within the purview of other Main Committees.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 145 (*continued*)

Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/891/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/53/891/Add.1).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 145.

Agenda item 161

Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/989)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/238).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 161.

Agenda item 165

Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/993)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 165.

Agenda items 30 and 58 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/53/L.77)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In connection with agenda items 30 and 58, the General Assembly has before it, under both items, a draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.77.

As a result of the consultations I have conducted in my capacity as Acting President of the General Assembly, agreements have been reached on: the date of the closing of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly — Tuesday, 5 September 2000, in the morning; the date of the opening of the fifty-fifth session — Tuesday, 5 September 2000, in the afternoon; and the beginning of the Millennium Summit — Wednesday, 6 September 2000.

In this connection, it was further agreed that the general debate of the fifty-fifth session would begin on Tuesday, 12 September 2000.

As a result of the agreements reached on those dates, the Assembly is now in a position to take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.77 without prejudice — I repeat, without prejudice — to the opening and closing dates of the future regular sessions of the General Assembly.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.77.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.77?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/239).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 30 and 58.

Agenda item 93 *(continued)*

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(f) Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Letter from Bangladesh (A/53/902 and Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly allocated agenda item 93 to the Second Committee. Subsequently, at its 91st plenary meeting on 15 December 1998, the General Assembly decided not to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 93 so that any necessary decisions on the special session on population and development may be taken by the General Assembly at an appropriate time.

In this connection, I should like to draw the attention of members to documents A/53/902 and addendum 1, which contain letters from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations.

In his letters, the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh informs the General Assembly that the Commission on Population and Development, acting as the preparatory committee for the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, in view of the complexity of the subject and the diversity of the views on some contentious issues, was not able to finalize its work on the main substantive document for the special session. The Commission has therefore decided to recommend that the General Assembly, at its fifty-third session, authorize the Commission on Population and Development, acting as the preparatory committee, to hold a resumed session for four days in May or June 1999 in order to complete its work.

The Permanent Representative of Bangladesh further informs the Assembly that, after consultations, 24, 25, 28 and 29 June 1999 were proposed as the dates for the resumed session of the preparatory committee.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division) *(spoke in French):* I should like to inform members that, in connection with the request by the Commission on Population and Development acting as the preparatory committee for the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, to hold its resumed session for four working days on 24, 25, 28 and 29 June 1999, there will be three meetings per day with full conference services. It is estimated that there will be 36 pages of pre-session, 36 pages of in-session and 18 pages of post-session documentation in six languages.

The conference-servicing requirements for the preparatory committee are estimated at $174,300. Provision is made under section 1B (General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services) of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, not only for meetings approved for the 1998-1999 biennium but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years.

Should the General Assembly decide to reconvene the preparatory committee, no additional appropriations would be required under section 1 B of the 1998-1999 programme budget.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly authorizes the Commission on Population and Development, acting as the preparatory committee for the twenty-first special session of the Assembly, to hold a resumed session on 24, 25, 28 and 29 June 1999?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 93.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.